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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend UNAVEM II mandate for 3 months and consider increasing its strength; notes positive developments at Lusaka peace talks; expresses concern at increased fighting and deplorable humanitarian situation in Angola.

+ General Assembly President, S. R. Insanally urges "Group of 77" developing countries to reassess strategies to deal with new world circumstances at thirtieth anniversary meeting.

+ Secretary-General expresses deep concern over increased casualties in Aden, Yemen; reiterates urgent need for immediate ceasefire and halt to shelling of city.

+ Guatemalan Government and URNG reach agreement on Commission to clarify human rights violations and violence commited during country's 30 year conflict.

+ South Africa's Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo say his country interested in promoting human rights and fostering peaceful relations with its neighbours.

+ Over 100 Haitian political asylum seekers processed through new procedures supervised by UNHCR on US hospital ship in Kingston, Jamaica; some asylum seekers arrested on return to Haiti.

+ Economic and Social Council begins 1994 substantive session Monday; President Richard Butler says Council faces major challenges in restoring its role in Organization's economic and social fields

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the mandate of United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) be extended for three months. In a report to the Security Council dated 20 June, the Secretary-General said the Mission's presence was an important factor in efforts to reach a political settlement. Given that progress, albeit

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painfully slow, was being made at the Lusaka peace talks, he trusted the Council would authorize an increase in UNAVEM II's strength. Initially, rapid reinforcement of its military, police and civilian staff would be needed to bring their numbers to pre-March 1993 levels.

The Secretary-General said, at present, it was not possible to say that both sides had demonstrated the necessary political will to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement, although they were probably closer than any time since late 1992. Agreement had been reached on all but one of the specific principles regarding national reconciliation, however, a major problem was UNITA's insistence on the post of Governor of Huambo. The Council might consider implementation of further measures against UNITA, provided for in a previous resolution, if it refused to accept proposals the Government had already agreed to.

The Secretary-General expressed serious concern at the increased fighting throughout the country, which was causing heavy casualties, extensive property damage and suffering to civilians. He recommended that the Council renew its call for an immediate end to hostilities and press both parties not to jeopardize the safety of relief workers or disrupt humanitarian operations.

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General Assembly President, S. R. Insanally has urged the "Group of 77" developing countries to reassess their strategies in order to deal with the new circumstances of today's world. He was addressing a special ministerial meeting at Headquarters today to commemorate the Group's thirtieth anniversary. Although the international political landscape was bleak it offered new vistas of opportunity. The Group must engage in a fresh dialogue on the need for consensus, as well as a comprehensive approach to development, he said.

President S. R. Insanally said that in the past important economic aspects of human security had been ignored. Development should be considered as an integral part of managing the world economy and should be broadened to reflect a new partnership involving shared responsibilities and commitments, he stressed. Such a partnership would not hinge solely on the transfer of resources but would entail a more productive interaction between domestic and international policies. Political authority should be given to the United Nations to determine policy and take decisions on development in much the same way as it acts on matters of peace and security.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed deep concern over the reported increase in casualties in Aden, particularly over the last 48 hours. He met today with the Minister of Planning in the Yemeni Government Mr. Abdel-Karim Al Eryani, and his Special Envoy and Head of the Fact-finding Mission to Yemen, Lakhdar Brahimi. The Secretary-General reiterated the urgency for Sana'a to declare an immediate ceasefire and a complete halt to the shelling of the city. He said this was needed so Mr. Brahimi's mission

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could proceed and a mechanism to supervise the ceasefire set up. The Yemeni Minister promised to convey the Secretary-General's request and report to him with Sana'a's reaction.

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The Guatemalan Government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) reached agreement yesterday on the establishment of a Commission to clarify human rights violations and violence commited during the country's 30 year conflict. The signing in Oslo, Norway, culminated two years of difficult negotiations, according to a United Nations spokesman. It reflected the parties' ability to deal successfully with one of the most sensitive issues affecting the Guatemalan people over the past three decades. It also demonstrated their commitment to a negotiated settlement, he said.

The Commission will report to the parties and to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali, and its six-month mandate will be renewable. It's recommendations will cover the promotion of peace and national reconciliation, measures to honour the memory of victims, respect for human rights and the strengthening of the democratic process. The Secretary-General congratulated the Guatemalan Government and the URNG on their agreement. He said it was an important achievement which was bound to strengthen national and international confidence in the peace negotiations, which the United Nations would continue to fully support.

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South Africa's Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said his country was interested in promoting human rights and democracy throughout the world. He told correspondents at Headquarters today that South Africa was also interested in fostering peaceful relations with its neighbours. Its foreign policy would aim to assist the country's internal processes which were reflected in the reconstruction and development programme its Parliament was discussing. Those programmes would help stabilize South Africa and would contribute to the stability of the entire world, he said.

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Over a hundred Haitians seeking political asylum have already been processed through new procedures supervised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A number of Haitians had been arrested upon being returned to Haiti after their applications for political asylum had been rejected, according to a UNHCR spokeswoman. By yesterday, nearly 300 asylum seekers had boarded the United States Hospital ship, the USS Comfort, docked in Kingston, Jamaica.

Twenty nine asylum seekers from the first group processed on 16 June were returned to Haiti and 23 three of them were arrested on their return, the spokeswoman said. All but three were later released. Those still being held by authorities in Haiti were believed to be the organizers of the boat departure. The UNHCR said it was watching the situation closely.

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The Economic and Social Council will begin its 1994 five-week substantive session at Headquarters on Monday. Council President Richard Butler (Australia) said the body faced major challenges concerning its role in the Organization's economic and social fields. That central coordinating role must be made more real, so that the Council could provide direction to development efforts, he stressed. Moreover, with the widening poverty gap, the international community must consider what it was doing wrong.

The Secretary-General's report on "An agenda for development" will be the theme of the Council's three-day high-level segment and it will be the first time it has been discussed at the intergovernmental level. The segment will open with a one-day policy dialogue on developments in the world economy between Council members and heads of multilateral financial and trade institutions.

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